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Assange out of London prison after plea bargain with the U.S.

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange was on Monday freed from a London prison where he spent 5 yrs fighting extradition to the US. Assange, 52, has agreed to plead guilty to one criminal count of conspiring to obtain and disclose classified US national defence documents, according to filings in the US District Court for Northern Mariana Islands, where hearing will be held on Wednesday. Under the plea, he won't face further prison time and can return home to Australia | P12

First election of Speaker in over 5 decades today

Trinamool yet to take call on supporting INDIA candidate K Suresh

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

WITH Parliament set to see an unprecedented election for the post of Lok Sabha Speaker on Wednesday, the Trinamool Congress (TMC), an ally of the INDIA bloc, is keeping the Opposition on the edge as the party is yet to reach a final decision on the matter.

While the BJP-led NDA nominated third time MP Om Birla for the Speaker's post for the second consecutive term, the Opposition forced an election by nominating the eight-time MP from Kerala, Kodikunnil Suresh, as its candidate after the talks between both sides failed to reach a consensus.

At a late evening INDIA bloc meeting, TMC leaders said they will co-operate with the Opposition on the Speaker's election. However, the final call will be taken on Wednesday.

The meeting was attended by several top leaders of the INDIA bloc, including Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, TMC's Derek O'Brien, Kalyan Banerjee, RSP's N K Premachandran and CPM's K Radhakrishnan. A senior Opposition leader who attended the meeting told this paper, "Though other parties, including the Congress, have issued a whip to their MPs for the election, the TMC said that they will convey their decision tomorrow after more consultations. But they have assured that they will co-operate with the Opposition in the Speaker election," he said.

Candidates for Speaker's post Om Birla (BJP) and Kodikunnil Suresh (INDIA)

OPPN DEMANDED DY SPEAKER POST

The last election for Speaker was in 1976. The INDIA bloc made a last minute decision to go for the contest after senior BJP leaders refused to accept its precondition that the Opposition must be offered the post of Deputy Speaker in lieu of supporting Birla

Earlier, TMC's Abhishek Banerjee complained that the Congress unilaterally decided to put up K Suresh as the INDIA bloc's candidate for the post without consultation.

A brief interaction involving Congress leader K C Venugopal and DMK's T R Baalu and Union ministers Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah and J P Nadda, at Singh's office in Parliament to evolve a consensus ended in acrimony as both sides stuck to their positions.

Speaking to reporters outside Parliament, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said, "Union minister Rajnath last evening said that he will call back our president Mallikarjun Kharge on our demand on the Deputy Speaker post. However, Rajnath ji has not returned the call. PM Modi says that there should be constructive cooperation and then our leader is being insulted. So their intention is clear," he said. Later, Venugopal accused the government of not following the "convention" of an opposition candidate for the Deputy Speaker's position.

With 50ml more, Nandini milk costlier by ₹2

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

A FEW days after the state government hiked the fuel prices by Rs 3 per litre and slashed the rates of high-end liquor, the milk price has been increased by Rs 2 per packet, but with a little more quantity. The new milk price will come into effect on Wednesday (June 26).

As per Karnataka Milk Federation's (KMF) order, there will be 50ml more in each Nandini milk packet -- half litre and one litre. The price has been hiked for each packet by Rs 2, irrespective of the type of milk.

"The price has not been hiked, it has been revised. As we have increased the quantity of milk in each packet, an additional amount is being charged. This is a temporary measure. Once the milk procurement reduces, the quantity of milk in each packet will be revised and so will the rates. We have increased the quantity and the cost as milk procurement from farmers has increased and that has to be adjusted and paid back to them," KMF Chairman Bheema Naik told *TNIE*.

However, this has not gone well with leaders of Opposition parties and citizens. They have accused the state government of doing this to fund the guarantee schemes.

But KMF officials defended the decision, saying the extra money earned will not go to the state exchequer. "We are not paying anything to the exchequer. The money earned will be passed on to farmers. P4

One more sexual assault case against Suraj

EXPRESS NEW SERVICE @ Hassan

ONE more alleged homosexual assault case was registered against MLC Dr Suraj Revanna at the Holenarasipur Rural police station on Tuesday evening.

The police said Suraj allegedly assaulted the victim during the Covid pandemic at his farm House in Gannikada. The victim did not file a police complaint as he was threatened with murder, the police said. On Suraj's insistence, he had filed a false complaint against the first victim from Arkalgud taluk, saying that the latter had tried to extort Rs 5 crore from the MLC, the police said.

Earlier in the day the Konanur police had filed a case of misappropriation of funds from a private finance company against the victim. He had gone missing after filing the complaint against the Arkalgud victim.

CBI's turn to go after Kejri to keep him in jail

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

COMPOUNDING troubles for jailed Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is all set to produce him before a trial court on Wednesday, which could result in his arrest by the agency, sources said on Tuesday.

The fresh development comes hours before the Supreme Court is scheduled to hear Kejriwal's plea challenging the Delhi High Court decision to stay the bail granted to him by a lower court.

Sources said the CBI had questioned Kejriwal on Monday in Tihar Jail and recorded his statement on the alleged irregularities in the Delhi liquor policy. On Tuesday, the central agency moved an application before a special court seeking a production warrant for Kejriwal, which was granted.

The CBI will produce Kejriwal before the trial court at 10 am on Wednesday, ahead of the Supreme Court hearing. Sources said that since Kejriwal is already in judicial custody in connection with a money laundering case by the Enforcement Directorate, his arrest by CBI can take place before a court.

If the CBI arrests Kejriwal and gets his custody, it is unlikely that the Delhi CM will be able to walk out of Tihar Jail on Wednesday even if the SC overturns the Delhi HC's stay on his bail.

Reacting to the development, the Aam Aadmi Party accused the CBI of "conspiring to register a fake case" against their leader. AAP leader Sanjay Singh said the Centre is conspiring to foist false cases against Kejriwal in a bid to keep him in jail.

Rahul named Leader of Oppn in LS

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

ON the eve of the election to the post of Lok Sabha Speaker, the Congress on Tuesday named Rahul Gandhi as the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha. The announcement came after a late evening meeting of floor leaders of the Opposition parties.

Congress general secretary (Organisation) KC Venugopal told the media, "CPP chairperson Sonia Gandhi wrote a letter to pro-tem Speaker Bhartruhari Mahtab, informing the decision of appointment of Rahul Gandhi as the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha." Rahul was sworn in as a member of the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. He has been an MP for five terms and now represents UP's Rae Bareli in the Lower House. Early this month, the Congress Working Committee had unanimously passed a resolution requesting Rahul to take up the post of the LoP.

EXPRESS READ

Sensex breaches 78,000 level

MUMBAI: BSE Sensex on Tuesday breached the 78,000 level for the first time while Nifty settled at a new record high, led by a rally in bank stocks. The Sensex breached the 77,000 mark on June 10 | P13

T20 WC: Afghans reach semi-final

KINGSTOWN: Afghanistan beat B'desh to make it to the T20 WC semis for the first time, knocking Oz out. They will face South Africa in semi-final 1 on Thursday. India will play England in semi-final 2 | P15